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AUG 24 2010

Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 21 to 23 and 30 are amended as set forth hereinafter.

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claims 1 to 20 (Cancelled).

21. (Currently Amended) A method for detecting ~~the actuation~~ an instantaneous degree of displacement of an operator-controlled element actuatable to assume different degrees of displacement wherein different operator-controlled functions of said element are realizable in dependence upon the degree of actuation thereof, the method comprising the steps of:

actuating said element against a spring force with two degrees of displacement being characterized by two different spring constants;

providing a sensor to detect the displacement of said element and output a signal value (U) proportional to said displacement;

determining ~~a quantity~~ the slope (dU/dt) of said signal value (U) characterizing ~~[[that]]~~ one of said spring constants corresponding to the instantaneous degree of the displacement of said element; and,

supplying said ~~quantity~~ slope (dU/dt) to a detector for

detecting one of the operator-controlled functions of said element in dependence upon said quantity slope (dU/dt).

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, comprising the further steps of:

determining a time-dependent course of said signal value;

5 selecting a slope of said time-dependent course of said signal value (U) as said quantity slope (dU/dt) characterizing the corresponding spring constant; and,

detecting said one of said operator-controlled functions in dependence upon ~~[[the]]~~ said slope (dU/dt) of said signal value (U).

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 22, comprising the further step of detecting said one of said operator-controlled functions when ~~[[the]]~~ said slope (dU/dt) of said time-dependent course of said signal value (U) lies in a pregiven region.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein said pregiven region is defined by a threshold value.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, comprising the further step of selecting said pregiven region so that the time-dependent course of said signal value (U) associated therewith occurs only via an automatic reset of said
5 operator-controlled element.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein said

automatic reset is achieved with an abrupt reduction of said spring force.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein said abrupt reduction of said spring force is effected by the spring constant assigned to the corresponding operator-controlled function.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, wherein said operator-controlled element is an accelerator pedal of a motor vehicle; one of said operator-controlled functions is a kick-down function or an escape-switch function to overcome an activated
5 speed limiting; and, at least one degree of displacement of said accelerator pedal in the vicinity of a stop is assigned to said one operator-controlled function.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, comprising the further step of detecting one of said operator-controlled functions only when said one operator-controlled function is detected several times within a pregiven time interval.

30. (Currently Amended) An arrangement for detecting ~~the~~
actuation an instantaneous degree of displacement of an
operator-controlled element actuatable to assume different degrees
of displacement wherein different operator-controlled functions
5 of said element are realizable in dependence upon the degree of
actuation thereof, the arrangement comprising:

said element being actuatable against a spring force with two

degrees of displacement being characterized by two different spring constants;

10 a sensor for detecting the displacement of said element and outputting a signal value (U) proportional to said displacement;

 means for determining ~~a quantity~~ the slope (dU/dt) of said signal value (U) characterizing ~~[[that]]~~ one of said spring constants corresponding to the instantaneous degree of the
15 displacement of said element; and,

 a detector for detecting one of the operator-controlled functions of said element in dependence upon said
~~quantity~~ slope (dU/dt).